

REMARKS

Claims 1-9 were pending when last examined, of which Claims 1-7 and 9 stand rejected.
Claim 8 is objected to. Claim 1 is amended.

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CENTRAL FAX CENTER**JUN 27 2007****Claim Rejections – 35 USC §112**

Claim 8 is rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Specifically, the Office Action states that there is insufficient antecedent basis for “the connection face” in the claim. Applicants disagree, as the antecedent basis is provided in the seventh line of Claim 8 as previously submitted on December 20, 2006, where it states, “... a second inclined face and a connection face ...” Hence, Applicants assume that this rejection was made based on some type of misunderstanding or misreading.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC §102

Claims 1, 4, and 9 are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,772,764 to Akimoto (“Akimoto”).

Claim 1 is patentable over Akimoto at least because it recites, “... a cleaning member covering the bottom face of the receiving recession to eliminate dregs of the material attached on the slit nozzle of the slit coater.” As shown in the subject application, for example in FIG. 1, the cleaning member 130 is deposited on the bottom face of the receiving recession 120. More specifically, the cleaning member 130 is deposited on the surface that is closest to the slit nozzle during operation so it can “eliminate [the] dregs of the material attached on the slit nozzle.” In contrast, Akimoto’s lid 36, which allegedly corresponds to the “cleaning member” of Claim 1, is formed on the outer surface of the receiving recession and does not serve the function of eliminating the dregs on the slit nozzle.

Furthermore, Applicants respectfully traverse that Akimoto’s lid 36 corresponds to the “cleaning member” of Claim 1. As recited, the “cleaning member” eliminates dregs of the material attached on the slit nozzle of the slit coater. Akimoto’s lid 36, however, does not serve such a function. Based on Akimoto’s disclosure, the lid 36 with holes 35a-35d is used to discharge the resist liquid that is discharged from the nozzles 23a-23d so that the resist liquid reaches the wafer W (Akimoto, column 4, lines 61-67). Thus, Akimoto’s lid 36 serves a function

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that is different from that of the “cleaning member” recited in Claim 1 and does not correspond to the “cleaning member.”

Claims 4 and 9 depend from Claim 1 and are patentable over Akimoto for the same reason as Claim 1.

Claims 1, 4, and 9 are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,374,312 to Hasebe et al. (“Hasebe”).

Claim 1 is patentable over Hasebe at least because it recites “... a cleaning member ... covering the bottom face of the receiving recession.” The Office Action reads the bottom section of Hasebe’s cleaning section 81 and discharge mechanism 83 as corresponding to the “cleaning member” of Claim 1. Under this reading, Claim 1 would be patentable over Hasebe because Hasebe fails to show a “bottom face” that is covered by the cleaning section 81. Under an alternative reading, the bottom section of Hasebe’s cleaning section 81 corresponds to “the bottom face” recited in Claim 1. Under this alternative reading, however, there is no “cleaning member” that covers the bottom face in Hasebe. Claim 1 separately recites “a cleaning member” *and* “a bottom face.” Hasebe shows one structure, bottom of cleaning section 81, that could be read as either the cleaning member or the bottom face. Under either reading, there is an element that is missing. Thus, Claim 1 is patentable over Hasebe under either reading.

Claims 4 and 9 depend from Claim 1 and are therefore patentable over Hasebe for the same reason as Claim 1.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC §103

Claims 2 and 3 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hasebe in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,019,843 to Park et al. (“Park”). Claims 5-7 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hasebe or Akimoto in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,210,481 to Sakai et al. (“Sakai”). These rejections assume that Hasebe or Akimoto teach or suggest all the elements of Claim 1 from which these claims depend. However, as explained above, this is not the case. Hence, not all the elements in Claims 2, 3, and 5-7 are taught by the cited combination of references and these claims are patentable over the references.

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Conclusion

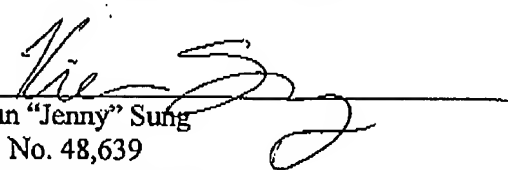
For the foregoing reasons, Claims 1-9 are now in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to call Applicant's attorney at the number below in order to speed the prosecution of this application.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any deficiencies in fees and credit any overpayment of fees to Deposit Account No. 50-2257.

Respectfully submitted,

MacPherson Kwok Chen & Heid LLP

Dated: June 27, 2007

By 
Kieun "Jenny" Sung
Reg. No. 48,639
Attorney for Assignee

MacPherson Kwok Chen & Heid
2033 Gateway Place, Ste. 400
San Jose, CA 95110
Tel: (408) 392-9250
Fax: (408) 392-9262